

SELF EXPRESSION IN MUSIC

Perry

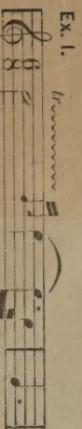
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French clavichrists of the eighteenth century, and in those by the English virginalists of the seventeenth century. When works dating from those earlier periods are prepared for publication at the present time it becomes the duty of the editor to substitute modern ornament signs that will be immediately understood, and will correctly express the meaning of the ancient ones; or else it behoves him to write out in full the more complicated ones. But the embellishments which rose in the classical period following the time of Bach reveal quite a different case, inasmuch as the compositions of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and of the more recent composers, can usually be printed without any considerable alteration of the ornaments, since those ornaments less commonly in use are generally written out by the composer.

THE TRILL AND ITS PROPER EXECUTION

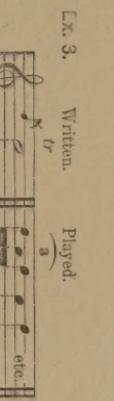
The trill (shake) is the most important of the embellishments. It is indicated by *(tr)*, with or without an appended wave-like line , for example, the trill in the *Adagio* of Beethoven's Sonata in G major (Op. 14, 1);



The trill begins on the note for which it is required (the note immediately over or under the trill sign) and continues as a rapid and regular alternation of this note (known as the principal note) and the note next above, which is known as the auxiliary note. This auxiliary note always conforms to the key signature, that is it is the next note above in the scale of the piece you are playing. Hence, as our example is in the key of C, and the principal note is C, the auxiliary note would be D, a whole step above C. If the trill had been upon E, the auxiliary note would have been one-half step above E. If the key of the piece had been different, let us say A flat, with four flats, and the trill on C the auxiliary note would have been D flat, one-half step above C, but the next note above

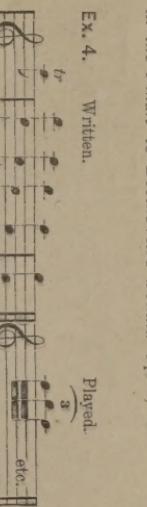
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exponent is also employed in modern editions of the classics. When the trill is to begin on the auxiliary note, as shown by the short appoggiatura, instead of the first two auxiliary notes, it is best to play three (a triplet). Our example above is thus simplified, and begins as follows:

Ex. 3. 

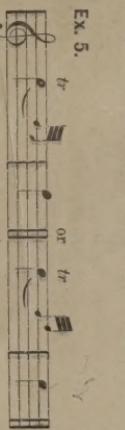
Written. Played.

When a trill is required for a note of short value it is best to play a triplet instead of a single note, and so make only one alternation between the principal note and its auxiliary, as, for example, in measure 25 in the *Finale* to Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2, III:

Ex. 4. 

Written. Played.

A trill must always end on the principal note, except when some form of "after-note" (*nachschlag*) is shown by small notes, written at its close, for instance:

Ex. 5. 

tr or tr

At the present time such passages are more usually written in the following manner:

Ex. 6. 

tr and tr

only take an after-note at the close, that is, at the point where the chain ceases.

The less-qualified player is particularly cautioned when playing trills not to overdo the matter, and exceed his strength, but as far as possible, without forcing himself, he should execute as many notes as he can do most conveniently, striving before all else to make his rendition perfectly smooth and wholly free from anything disturbing to the even flow of the tones.

A number of *accidentals* (                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              <img alt



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or else play both voices as a short, inverted mordent, called in German a *pralltriller*, for example:

Ex. 12.

tr as



In a great many cases, and especially in modern music, when the trill-sign is written over notes of short value, it is also practical to play this as an inverted mordent, and often the inverted mordent is the ornament intended by the composer, as at the close of the *Adagio* movement in Beethoven's C major Sonata, Op. 2 III:

Ex. 13.

b



N. B.

(The second section of this article will deal with the mordent, the turn, the appoggiatura, etc.)

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SELF-EXPRESSION IN MUSIC.

BY EDW. BAXTER PERRY.

[The following stimulating article by the eminent American pianist, Edward Baxter Perry, was intended for the "Self-Help, Uplift and Inspiration" number of THE ETUDE, published last October, but was omitted because of space restrictions.—EDITOR'S NOTE.]

MANY persons who play fairly well compositions on which they have been carefully drilled by the teacher both in technic and interpretation, as well as many who read well at first sight and give a reasonably good idea of the character and content of the work have no conception of the way such a work comes into being or why it was written.

The best, quickest and most practical method of getting such a conception, of realizing the composer's aims, judging of the relative success of his efforts and understanding the possibilities and limitations of the material with which he has to work, is to try it one's self, no matter how primitive and inadequate the first attempt may be. In other words, if you would learn fully and easily to understand and thereby to interpret correctly what other people have composed, begin, at once, by trying to produce compositions yourself. At first, of course, you must work in the simplest way and in the shortest possible forms, and if you have any creative ability latent within you this is the quickest, in fact, the only way to develop it, and it will grow with a rapidity that will astonish you.

MUSIC IS A LANGUAGE.

Remember that music is a language. Primarily, of course, the language of *emotion*, but also, secondarily, the language of thought of fancy and, by means of symbolism, of description and narration.

If you would use it well you must not only study its elements, its grammar, so to speak, and become familiar with the way others have used it in the past, but, above all, you must use it yourself for the purpose for which it was intended, namely, the expression of the thoughts and moods in your own brain and heart.

At the first attempt it may seem difficult, well nigh impossible; but persevere. You will find it after a little much easier than it appears.

Start with some very simple, concrete emotion like sorrow or joy and try to express it on the piano in one phrase of four or eight measures, the shorter the better at first.

We do not expect the student of English composition to begin by writing a novel, or a five-act drama, but by expressing some thought, or describing some scene, in his own words, simply, briefly but clearly.

We do not ask the beginner in the study of painting to try a picture of the battle of Waterloo or a sunset on Mt. Blanc for his first venture, but to copy some small, simple thing in nature like an oak leaf or a pansy blossom.

Do not attempt to make a concert piece for the piano and get discouraged because you fail, as you certainly will, but fix clearly in your mind the idea or mood which you are to express; then try with a few chords or a short phrase of melody with suitable accompaniment to embody it so unmistakably that a person in the next room will understand what

you are trying to say in music without being told. A few, seemingly obvious, suggestions as to the *modus operandi* may, nevertheless, be of aid to the beginner.

SELECTING THE KEY.

First: Select your key deliberately and with intention in reference to its fitness for the purpose you have in view, just as the painter chooses his colors to meet the demands of his intended subject. He would not take blue to paint a meadow, or red for the summer sky, and he would not pick up anything at random and try to make it serve a given purpose. He must select carefully, using his judgment. Every key or tonality has its own peculiar character and tone-color; is specially adapted for the expression of certain moods, and wholly unfit for others.

Speaking in a general way, the major keys are the brightest, most cheerful, especially those in sharps. The majors in flats are more tender and subdued in color, better suited to the expression of tranquil and pensive, but still quietly happy moods. The minors express varying degrees of sadness, despondency and despair.

Your key decided upon, bear in mind that you have three elements at your disposal, and only three: rhythm, melody and harmony.

Each of these has a distinct and independent means of expression, and these three combined form the sum total of the composer's resources in the production of the all but infinite variety of effects within the scope of tonal art, emotional or descriptive. Rhythm is the simplest of these elements, the easiest to grasp and always the first to be utilized.

In the musical evolution of the primitive races the instruments of percussion, like the drum and the tom-tom, antedate all others in history. A slow, monotonous rhythm suggests, and produces, depression, physical and mental. A more rapid and varied movement indicates and causes elation, excitement, courage and gaiety.

Melody comes next in the development of a race or an individual. It was suggested and based upon the inflexions of the human voice rising in pitch and increasing in power in surprise, delight, exultation; falling in disappointment, sadness and pain. The gradual sinking in semitone intervals especially indicates longing and distress.

Harmony is the last to be evolved, the most complex and by far the richest and most varied in its possibilities, but for that very reason the most difficult to command for the novice.

A careful study of the relations and possible combinations of chords is, of course, a great help in acquiring a mastery of this most important of resources in musical expression and a study of established and well defined musical forms gives greater facility in putting one's ideas in clear and logical shape; but neither will make a composer, any more than the study of syntax and prosody will make a poet. Only familiarity, bred by constant, practical use of musical material, musical symbolism, and terminology, will develop any real capacity in the line of self-expression.

THE CAPACITY FOR SELF-EXPRESSION.

You may study grammars and dictionaries all you please but you will never learn to speak any language fluently till you begin to hear it spoken and to speak it yourself in daily life. The same is absolutely true of music.

If you would compose, begin by composing. Learn the possibilities of the art and your own limitations by practical experiment, then extend and enlarge both.

When you have found that you can express a single, simple emotion clearly in a few measures, try something a little more complex in a somewhat more extended form, fear or sadness changing to relief or joy, happiness suddenly clouded by grief, despair brightening into the dawn of hope. Then, later, try something in a more objective and realistic vein; a boat ride with a rocking motion, the dip of the oars and splash of the waves suggested in the accompaniment, and little embellishments; the general mood indicated by the character of the melody and the harmonic coloring.

Try to imitate the ripple of a mountain stream, the sigh of the wind, the fall of rain, the great Atlantic rollers breaking on a lonely beach, the flitter and crackle of a camp-fire followed by an Indian war-dance about it; in short, anything that your fancy indicates. Try, not once but many times, in different

ways. Test your powers and the latent possibilities of your instrument and feel the delight (and there are few greater) of seeing both grow. Dig, diligently, deep into the secret depths of your being and see if you may find a vein of the precious stuff of which genius is made, for it is *made*, not given or flung at one's head.

LEARN THE REAL SIGNIFICANCE OF MUSIC.

The material must be there, of course, if anything important is to result, but it will never see the light without the pick and shovel, the brawny arm and dogged perseverance of the laborer, who delves for it and brings it forth with infinite toil. It has been said that "Genius is inspiration and talent is perspiration," but I venture the assertion that there is no difference between them except that in *degree*, and that fame like daily bread must be earned by the sweat of the brow.

If you fail of achieving fame, or even of producing art-works of real merit by the process outlined, you will at least learn the significance of music as a means of expression, will be able to appreciate what others have written and to play like an intelligent being for the sake of bringing out what is in the composition and not merely, parrot-like, imitating the inflections of the teacher in a phrase learned by rote.

AN INTERESTING GAME.

Let me, in this connection, suggest an interesting and helpful exercise, or, if you will, a musical game, for use at meetings of musical clubs and gatherings of classes of piano students.

Let each person present write on a slip of paper some thought or emotion or scene, to be expressed in music; deposit the slips in a box; draw lots, or select alphabetically, for turns to play. Then let each, as he goes to the piano, take a slip from the box, without knowing, or letting others know, what is on it, take a moment for reflection and then express, as well as may be, on the piano, the suggestion on the slip, in a short improvisation, and let the members of the audience write what they think is on the slip drawn; then read them and compare the original with the impressions the playing has produced. This will stimulate and develop not only the original powers of the player, but the insight, perception and discrimination of the listeners.

If the improvisations are found to be too difficult or too unsatisfactory at first, follow the same plan, in the main, but let the slips be written and distributed at one meeting and the playing done at the next, thus giving the player a chance to prepare at home and at leisure a brief composition expressing the desired thought or mood.

A NOVEL TEST.

Another practical plan for work along this line, especially if one is pursuing it *alone*, would be (if I may be pardoned a little egotism) to secure a copy of my recent book, "Stories of Standard Teaching Pieces," look up the description of some composition of moderate difficulty with which you are not familiar (I have tried to explain the ideas contained in each clearly), fill your mind with the thought, or scene, or mood described, then try, for two weeks, to express it to your satisfaction on the piano. Memorize or write down the final result, then get the music mentioned, study it carefully, and compare your production with it, in detail, and see where it differs or falls short of the model by Schumann, Mendelssohn or whomsoever the composer may be. See if just what he uses for the required end and, if possible, the precise reason for it. Notice the effects of melody, harmony and rhythm and the details of form. In this way you will have constant stimulus for the imagination, fresh material to work on, and a definite model to strive towards.

Continue the process with other compositions in like manner, and, if you have any creative ability at all, dormant within you it will awaken, and grow in a way to surprise and delight you beyond all expectation. If you can, submit your completed productions for correction and criticism to some good teacher, it would be a great help, but unfortunately you will find most teachers of composition more interested in the *form* than the *content* of your work.

It has been charged against the musician that he is far too prone to talk music all the time. Remember the epigram of Sydney Smith regarding Macaulay, "He has occasional flashes of silence that make his conversation perfectly delightful."



Some Embellishments Which Perplex Piano Pupils

By the Distinguished German Musical Savant
DR. HUGO RIEMANN

Author of "Riemann's Dictionary," Lecturer on Music at the
Leipzig University

Dr. Carl Wilhelm Julius Hugo Riemann, now regarded throughout the world as one of the most distinguished and erudite authorities upon musical theoretical subjects, joins the long list of eminent musicians who have honored the music teachers, students and music lovers of America through contributions to THE ETUDE. Dr. Riemann was born at Grossmehlau, near Sondershausen, July 18, 1859. He was a pupil of Ratschberger, Frankenberger and Barthel and a student of law, philosophy and history at the Universities of Berlin and Tübingen. In 1870 he became a student at the Leipzig Conservatory. He won his degree of Doctor of Philosophy with a musical thesis at the University of Göttingen in 1873. He became a lecturer at the conservatory of Leipzig, Hamburg and Sondershausen. In 1895 he became a lecturer at the Leipzig University. Besides his musical compositions he has written numerous works upon musical theory and musical history. His best known work is Riemann's Dictionary, which has passed through many editions.]

It is a familiar fact that embellishments which are not written out definitely in rhythmic values, but are indicated either by abbreviating signs (*tr* ~ ~ ~) or by very small notes placed without fixed time value in the measure, are always a troublesome matter to lovers of music who have not had professional training, and for that reason either are not clear as to the meaning of these ornaments or else are embarrassed in trying to arrange them properly in the measure. The following simple directions are intended as an aid for them in their perplexity.

We shall wholly disregard signs that are antiquated and obsolete. Fundamental, historical study is essential to the correct understanding and proper execution of the embellishments that occur in compositions by the French clavichimists of the eighteenth century, and in those by the English virginalists of the seventeenth century. When works dating from those earlier periods are prepared for publication at the present time it becomes the duty of the editor to substitute modern ornament signs that will be immediately understood, and will correctly express the meaning of the ancient ones; or else it behoves him to write out in full the more complicated ones. But the embellishments which rose in the classical period following the time of Bach reveal quite a different case, inasmuch as the compositions of Haydn, Mozart, Beethoven and of the more recent composers, can usually be printed without any considerable alteration of the ornaments, since those ornaments less commonly in use are generally written out by the composer.

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The trill begins on the note for which it is required (the note immediately over or under the trill sign) and continues as a rapid and regular alternation of this note (known as the principal note) and the note next above, which is known as the auxiliary note. This auxiliary note always conforms to the key signature, that is it is the next note above in the scale of the piece you are playing. Hence, as our example is in the key of C, and the principal note is C, the auxiliary note would be D, a whole step above C. If the trill had been upon E, the auxiliary note would have been one-half step above E. If the key of the piece had been different, let us say A flat, with four flats, and the trill on C the auxiliary note would have been D flat, one-half step above C, but the next note above in the scale of A flat.

The rapidity of the trill depends upon the rapidity of the tempo of the piece and upon the technical capabilities of the performer. In all cases the alternation must be regular and the number of notes made proportionate to the number of time units indicated by the principal note. In the case of this example from Beethoven a moderate degree of rapidity is advisable, namely four thirty-seconds to each eighth note of the accompaniment.

Ex. 2.



The amateur can wholly ignore the old rule that a trill must begin on the auxiliary note. When the modern composer desires this form of trill he writes a short appoggiatura. This short appoggiatura, sometimes called acciacatura, is a small note with a stroke through its hook at the beginning of the trill. This expedient is also employed in modern editions of the classics. When the trill is to begin on the auxiliary note, as shown by the short appoggiatura, instead of the first two auxiliary notes, it is best to play three (a triplet). Our example above is thus simplified, and begins as follows:

Ex. 3. Written.



When a trill is required for a note of short value it is best to play a triplet instead of a single note, and so make only one alternation between the principal note and its auxiliary, as, for example, in measure 25 in the *Finale* to Beethoven's Sonata Op. 2, III:

Ex. 4. Written.



A trill must always end on the principal note, except when some form of "after-note" (nachschlag) is shown by small notes, written at its close, for instance:

Ex. 5.



At the present time such passages are more usually written in the following manner:

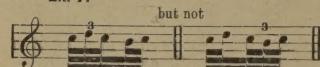
Ex. 6.



because, after one has become accustomed to the regular use of the after-notes of the trill it is an easy matter to fall into the error either of reading the small notes falsely or else of supposing some mistake on the part of the printer.

The normal after-note to a trill is written in small notes at the close of the trill (the same as in our first example), and calls for a single alternation of the principal note and its auxiliary note below, therefore, for a trill upon C, a conclusion by means of an after-note would be B C. But let it be remembered that, as rule, the written principal note is played on the accented parts of the measure, and, therefore, upon the several eighth or sixteenths, respectively; and, furthermore, that the fifth note from the end of the trill should be the first note of a triplet, while the last five notes, divided into three notes and two notes, respectively, make the proper ending with an after-note. This may be exemplified as follows:

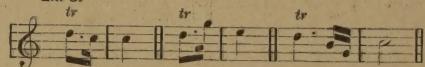
Ex. 7.



In this way the after-note is made much clearer.

It may be stated that, as a rule, every long trill has an after-note, even though it be not indicated. But the after-note is incorrectly used when a note of short value follows the trill, as, for example:

Ex. 8.



and in both of the instances in the fifth example given above.

Chain trills and leaping-trills, such as:

Ex. 9.



only take an after-note at the close, that is, at the point where the chain ceases.

The less-qualified player is particularly cautioned when playing trills not to overdo the matter, and exceed his strength, but, as far as possible, without forcing himself, he should execute as many notes as he can do most conveniently, striving before all else to make his rendition perfectly smooth and wholly free from anything disturbing to the even flow of the tones.

A number of accidentals (b, ♭, ♮, ♯) are used in connection with the sign (*tr*), and these always affect the one or the other of the auxiliary notes. For example:

Ex. 10.



A trill is never used in any interval other than a major or minor second. In the last instance in the above example the trill is upon B flat and C, and even though the accidentals were omitted, C sharp would not be played. As after-note the under auxiliary note conforming to the key of the composition is always understood. In the following example, however, which is in D minor, with B flat, the augmented second, C sharp and B flat, would be impossible. The after-note of the trill on C sharp would, therefore, demand a B natural, thus:

Ex. 11. Written.



The double trill makes even higher demands upon the ability of the player than the simple trill, for the reason that the less advanced player may have to be satisfied with a trill in only one of the two voices,

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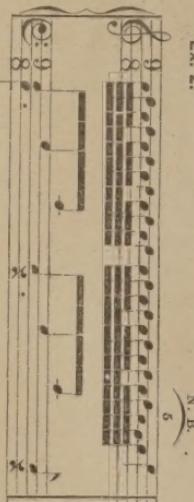
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